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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JEANNE SHAHEEN, a Senator from the State of New Hampshire.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Lord of the nations, we come as we are today into Your sacred presence. Lord, we feel unworthy of Your mercy and grace and long to please You by living to honor Your Name. Some of us are cornered by temptation, others are deep in grief, and still others are anxious about tomorrow. Supply our very needs according to the riches of Your powerful providence.

In a special way, sustain our Senators. Help them to cast their burdens on You because You know all about them and have the power to answer even before they call. Remind them that You desire to hear their prayers more than they long to be heard. May they remember Your promise to keep them from stumbling and slipping.

We pray in the Redeemer's Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JEANNE SHAHEEN led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, March 17, 2009.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable JEANNE SHAHEEN, a Senator from the State of New Hampshire, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mrs. SHAHEEN thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Madam President, following leader remarks, there will be an hour of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each. The majority will control the first 30 minutes; Republicans will control the final 30 minutes. Following morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to H.R. 146, the legislative vehicle for the lands package. The Senate will recess from 12:30 until 2:15 to allow for the weekly caucus lunches.

SENATE AGENDA

Mr. REID. Madam President, as a result of a number of conversations with various people last night, I think we are at a point where we should shortly be able to enter into an agreement to complete H.R. 146. Senator COBURN is going to offer six amendments. We are going to agree on a time for those amendments. We have the subject matter, and staff is going to work out the—I am told the legislative language has been drafted on the bills, so it seems to me we should be in a position to move

forward. With the six amendments, we should be able to finish the legislation without a lot of heavy lifting tomorrow—maybe early tomorrow—which would allow us to do some nominations and get some of those done before we leave here. So I hope that will work out. We are not there yet, but I think we are very close.

I had a meeting this morning with Senator BINGAMAN. He understands the subject matter of the amendments—he being the chair of the Energy Committee, which has the jurisdiction of everything in this bill—so that should take care of that matter.

I note the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

AIG BONUSES

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, over the weekend we learned the extent of the bonuses being paid to some of the same people at AIG who got this company in the position it is in. Many of us on both sides of the aisle expressed absolute outrage that these bonuses could be paid. Yesterday, the White House joined that chorus and promised to do everything possible to get the taxpayers' money back. Well, we certainly appreciate those efforts. However, it could have been handled a little differently. It would have been better if this pledge had included action 2 weeks ago. Just 2 weeks ago, the

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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